

Hibernia Curiosa

A

LETTER

From A

Gentleman in Dublin,

To His

Friend at Dover in Kent.

Giving a general View of the

Manners, Customs, Dispositions, &c.

Of The

Inhabitants of IRELAND.

With occasional Observations on the S t a t e of Trade and Agriculture in that Kingdom.

And including an Account of some of Its most remarkable NATURAL CURIOSITIES, such as SALMON LEAPS, WATER-FALLS, CASCADES, GLYNNS, LAKES, &c.

With a more particular DESCRIPTION of the GIANT'S CAUSEWAY in the North ; and the celebrated LAKE OF KILARNY in the South of Ireland ; taken from an attentive Survey and Examination of the ORIGINALS.

Collected in a TOUR THROUGH THE KINGDOM in the Year 1764 : And ornamented with Plans of the principal Originals, engraved from Drawings taken on the Spot.

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T O T H E

Right Honourable the Lady
LOUISA CONOLLY,

The following
STRICTURES of a Civil and Natural
History of I R E L A N D,

Are most humbly inscribed.

By

Her Ladyship's

Most respectful.

And most obedient,

Humble servant,

J. Bush.

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TO THE READER.

The following sheets are intended to give him a general view of the present natural and civil state of Ireland, and to serve, principally, as a conduct, to the curious traveller, to some of the most remarkable natural curiosities of that kingdom. The writer has not introduced many of them, indeed, for the island he writes on is fertile of voluminous natural history ; but such as he has taken notice of are some of the principal in their kind, of those that occurred to him in his journies through the country ;—and his intentions, at present, are not so much to write a natural history of the kingdom, as to exhibit a view of what may be expelled from one.

Natural history so long as the descriptive is employed on subjects worthy the notice of the curious, and carefully taken from nature itself instead of spurious, unnatural pictures of it, collected into a *fifth story* for the sedentary, domestic traveller to draw his copies from, is a science, perhaps, of all others, the most generally pleasing and fertile of entertainment.—Nor is there a country in the worlds perhaps, of equal extent, where the curious natural-ist will find a greater scope, or variety of subjects, for his entertainment than in this fertile, Hibernian isle ; yet it seems to have been almost totally neglected by the natural historians, and tour-writers, of our own times and country, from hence, as it should seem., that they had no materials to compile from.

Excepting Mr. Smith's history of one or two counties in the south of Ireland, wrote within these twenty years, and in which some of the natural history of those counties is included, there have been but one or two writers, and those of the last century or the beginning of this, who have attempted to give any thing like a natural history of Ireland, and the greatest part of these appear to have been wrote implicitly from tradition or the hear say of other people ; for no person would imagine, on a comparison of their accounts with the originals, that they had ever seen them : and the blunders of these have been retailed out by the writers of our own times, who have, occasionally, dip'd their pens into Irish history ; for to see the originals, either of this or their own country, is quite out of the way of our natural historians, tour-writers, and *illustrators* ; which is the reason, I presume, why their productions are now treated with so much negligence and contempt. And how, indeed, can the writers, or rather their employers, expect it should be otherwise, when every gentleman that has ever been, through his country knows that one half nearly of what they palm upon us for natural history, has no existence but in their own, or the imaginations of others, from whom they have collected or compiled their accounts and descriptions ; and which even of such subjects as have some existence in nature, are as much like the originals, indeed, as a sixpenny picture of KING-GEORGE & QUEEN-SHARLOT, stuck up with a cat's *head* in a *pottage-pot* against the walls of a cottage in *Lancashire*.

They are *domestic travellers*, or rather, if you please, *garret-riders*, employed, and their expences borne, by our hisoriographical dealers. And, indeed, whoever shall have had opportunity of comparing the originals with the representations given of them by our tour-writers and *illustrators*, will have sufficient reason to believe, that from *Homer's-Head* to the nearest *chop-house* was one of the longest journeys the traveller had taken.— You gentlemen, in the paper and calf-skin trade, have a little patience, and you shall have an *original* natural history, or tour, to work upon, to pick out, pick in, curtail, transpose, digest, *methodize* or however you please, according to the art and mystery of your profession. We assure you. Sirs, by This is not meant the following production, for though 'tis perfectly original, and therefore should be one of the best subjects in your shops to work upon, yet it is beyond your profoundest art to *methodize*.

If it were allowed to judge of the opinions of others from one's own, I should, without any hesitation, take it for granted, that the reason why the generality of our tour-writers and *illustrators* are so dull and unentertaining, are, in the first place, from their foolish attachment to what is called order and method in the classing the several subjects that are taken into their account. But which methodical process, indeed, is far from being naturally adapted to, or by any means necessarily connected with the purposes of entertaining the reader, on the contrary is, for the most part, subversive of them.—But the second, and more general reason is, from their stuffing us with a heavy, sickening load of dull insignificant descriptions, which whether true or false are, at best insipid, and can serve only to nauseate the appetite against every thing that is tasteful and digestible,

Suppose, for once, we should have a tour historical, in order to realize it, in a manner to the imaginations of the reader, wrote a little more conformable to the general plan of a tour itinerant. Why, for instance, must a gentleman whose taste and inclination for travelling shall carry him through the kingdom, to gratify his curiosity with a view of the general face of the country, and of what is really curious and deserving his notice, either in the artificial or natural productions of it, why must he, against all sense and taste, be confined to the dull, stupid, and unnatural method of circulating and zig-zagging through all the insignificant towns of every county he gets into, before he can leave it ; or why must he waste as much time and patience in one county, as will carry him with pleasure through half a score. You, grave Sirs, that are dealers in method and margin, and imagine it is making the most of your tours and illustrations—may call this travelling *methodically* ;—but the devil's in't if it is travelling with pleasure, or making the most of the journey.—And 'tis to be presumed, indeed, there are but few gentlemen who would not soon be tired of their journey, where this to be the prescribed plan of their entertainment, that by such tedious advances wears out their time and patience, within the circuit of fifty miles, perhaps, while they might be going on for five hundred, through a constant diversity of prospects, and variety of entertainment.

One would imagine, indeed, that the writer of a natural history, or a tour through his own or any other country, would be apt to consider his reader as a traveller through the country, and himself as his guide or conduct to such objects or curiosity, whether of art or nature, that should be supposed naturally to engage his notice and attention, and that the most promising, or the most natural method for keeping up the entertainment of his reader, should be the same with the most eligible plan of a journey, that is to say,—That which affords the greatest mixture and diversity of entertainment ; and, therefore, that in the execution of his office he should have no right, like most of our public undertakers, and commission gentlemen to protract as long as possible, the possession of his office, in order to make the most of it, by stopping him at every market town he should go thro', to examine into the antiquities of it, for the useful acquisition of knowing who built the first house, or laid the first stone of the parish church,——whether the markets were kept on Wednesdays or Saturdays,——if more sheep than bullocks were brought to the fair,——or if more Farnham than Canterbury hops were generally sold there ; and whether the town were governed by a Mayor and Aldermen, or by after *old women in long-riding-hoods*.

Such pompous *illustrations* as on this plan may be compiled, whether copies of, or the errors and blunders of preceding illustrators *methodiz'd*, may be calculated indeed, from their figure and price to support the vanity and self importance of a starch'd pedantic prig of a bookseller, who may be supposed, for his own emolument, to set the compiler to work but it must be at the expence of the time, patience and pocket of the reader.

Much a-kin to these are those other classes of hireling authors of various departments, who are employed for the emolument of these dealers in paper and calve's skins, to retale ye out, *numerically*, at a small and insensible expence, a history, a dictionary, or a bible, (and to

cheat the poor devils at Cambridge, and Oxford) with notes explanatory, &c. &c. But before their numeric productions are finished take care to extraSl a ?noli exorbitant expence of] eventually, three times the mercantile value.

But still nearer a-kin is that class of hireling pedagogal priggs, the abridgers, or rather mutilators of our civil history, who, for their own and their masters interest engage to furnish you at a very easy expence, with the *medullam* of your civil history, or any thing else,—but instead of entertaining you with the marrow only, will cram ye with the very skin, hair and offal, and for the pretended moderate expence of fourteen or fifteen numbers, will, by an infamous species of extortion, put ye to the most immoderate expence of fifty or threescore, before what you have already taken, can become of any value,— and like true, and well-bred knights of *the post*, who *while they* beg your honor for two-pence, will *pick* your honor's pocket of forty shillings.—Damn the whole fraternity of 'em.— Sir, I mean of knights of the post, from Pall-mall to Pater-noster.

In the drawing up the following loose and cursory hints, for the writer himself thinks them no better, he has been careful to introduce nothing to the reader, but what he supposes would naturally engage his notice as a stranger, where he travelling through the country. They include the substance of a correspondence during his travels through the kingdom, but are intended, indeed, to give the reader no more than the general outlines of the appearance of things, such as they will offer themselves to the transient spectator, including a sketch of some, amongst many, of the species of *natural entertainment* he may expect to find in the country.

He has this farther recommendation to offer on the merits of the contents of the following specimen, they are wrote with candour and ingenuity, untinctured with prejudice or partiality ; such as the originals appeared to him, with an honest freedom, and without respect of persons, he has, in every case, endeavoured to depicture them to his readers.

If any class of gentlemen of the kingdom he writes from, whether civil or clerical, shall think themselves too freely or too severely dealt with, he takes this opportunity of declaring, that to none, but those who deserve it, has he the least desire, or intention, that any degree of censure should derive ; and, in perfect confidence of this, likewise, that none but those, whose insuperable consciousness shall point the application, will suggest to themselves any offence.

Who claims the picture knows his right.

Gay.

The several plans exhibit a natural representation of the originals as far as they extend.

In the descriptive, he has copied immediately from nature, without the least implicit reliance on any accounts whatever : from this, at least, he hopes some merit will be allowed to the attempt, that it is perfectly original, and for the truth of which, the reader has this general security, that there were no materials to be found, within the *bills of mortality*, from which to palm upon him the *domestic travels* of the writer,

The universal absence, indeed, in the warehouses of literary commerce of any thing modern of this kind, relative to Ireland, added to the advice of some few gentlemen of both kingdoms, on whose judgment of the merits he could with, more safety rely than his own, was an encouragement to offer this novel sketch of civil and natural history to the public. Such as it is, the performance is submitted to the candid censure of the reader.—The curious votarist of nature, he presumes, will derive some entertainment from it.—The curious, from a narrow and selfish confinement of his taste and pursuits, will think, perhaps, neither the

subject nor the country worth his notice. To the all sufficient gentlemen of this class he makes no appeal, nor expects from them any encouragement.

Should the following specimen of Hibernian entertainment be found acceptable, the writer proposes in some future opportunity, not very far off, perhaps, to offer a more extensive natural history of this, in the *natural* view of it, particularly, entertaining country, on the plan he has above hinted at, on one that will be new, and he hopes entertaining to the reader, on a plan that shall, at least, have this merit in it, that if ever the reader goes through the country, he may have the satisfaction of finding the natural appearances of things correspond to this history and description of them.

He has only to add, that to have contributed, even by the present short and imperfect outlines, towards the removal and obliteration of any national and illiberal prejudices, and to the promoting a greater intercourse of our gentlemen of fortune and curiosity with a country that, in a natural view of it, especially, deserves more attention than is generally given to it, will be the source of the most agreeable reflections to

The Editor

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HIBERNIA CURIOSA.

To Mr, W. A — D — N.

Dear Sir,

AGREEABLE to promise in our last from Dublin, I will, now, that I have finished my tour through the greater part of Ireland, give you some account of the country, its inhabitants, and, what you more particularly desired from me, a description of some of its greatest natural curiosities. Indeed I never was so happily situated for providing materials for the entertainment of a taste like yours, for the curious and romantic subjects of nature, cultivated by a life for many years conversant with scenes of this kind, [1] as I have, been while travelling through Hibernia.

Perhaps It may not be altogether unentertaining to you, by way of introduction, to have a little sketch of our journey and passage thither.—From London our first course was to West Chester, distant from Ireland about 150 miles, and from London 190. From Chester there are two passages to Dublin, either of which may be taken as shall best suit the convenience of the traveller.

The one from Park-Gate, a little seaport for packets and traders, about 12 miles below Chester.—The other over-land, for 80 or 90 miles, to Holy-Head, the most western point of North Wales in the isle of Anglesey, and distant from Ireland about 23 Leagues.

The passage is likewise frequently made from Bristol by those who are not apprehensive of danger from the sea. And this is generally taken, I believe, by the quality and gentry from Ireland that visit Bath.—The distance from Bristol to the nearest port in Ireland is about 200 miles.

The shortest passage that can be made from Great-Britain to Ireland is from Port Patrick in Galloway county, Scotland, from whence to Donaghadee in the county of Down, is about seven or eight leagues, or nearly the same distance as from Dover to Calais. But it is hardly worth while to go at least 200 miles by land extraordinary to save 40 by sea from Holy Head,

and I therefore very few, except those whose business calls them to the north of Ireland, will go to Port Patrick for a passage.

There is, however, but little danger in crossing the Irish sea from any of these places, except at the vernal and autumnal seasons of the year, at which times, especially in the autumnal, the winds are frequently very high and tempestuous, and the channel consequently extremely rough and dangerous.

Those who shall take the Chester road, if they have much baggage to carry and are not fearful of the sea, will find the passage from Park-Gate much the easiest and the most convenient, as it is very troublesome and expensive getting heavy luggage for 90 miles over the mountainous country, and wide and rapid ferry ways of North Wales.—However, the passage over land is of late years, made much safer and more convenient, by the making a turn-pike road through the country, and by the running of a coach or two from Chester to the Head, which they perform in two days very well ; or otherwise you may be accommodated with horses and a guide from Chester quite on to the Head ; the road to which lays through Flint, Denbigh, and Carnarvon counties ; and the variety of land and sea prospects in fine weather, makes a ride over the mountainous country of North Wales extremely entertaining.

St. Vinifred's well, at Holy-well in Flinshire, and the first stage from Chester, is well worthy the notice of the traveller, from the singularity of the place, and the veneration that is paid to it by great numbers of religious devotees, foreign as well as domestic that annually visit the well ; many from devotion to the fair saint that is supposed to preside here, but more loaded with faith and infirmities, with expectations of a cure from its pretended miraculous sanative virtues.

'Tis a very remarkable spring of fine water, in such quantity, that at the distance of 20 yards it keeps a water-mill continually going. The place where it rises is inclosed in the form of a bath, about 12 feet long by six or seven wide, over which has been built, by the monks of former ages, a most curious and venerable Gothic structure, in honour to St. Vinifred, who first bestowed her benediction on the spring. 'Tis an excellent cold bath, and when it proves serviceable as such, the situation it is in, under such a venerable superstructure, are circumstances sufficient to possess the minds of superstitious credulity with imaginations of a supernatural cure.

The vale of Clويد, a very extensive and beautiful vale, through which you pass between Holy-well and Conway, which runs through this north part of Wales for a great many miles, from the borders of Shropshire on to Wrexham, Ruthing, Denbigh, and St. Asaph, northward to the sea, is judged to be some of the most fertile land, and productive of the richest pasturage in Great-Britain.

The first day's journey is generally finished at Aberconway in Carnarvonshire, the capital or residence of the ancient princes of Wales ; into which you descend from the most enormous mountains, some of them, in Great-Britain, properly enough called Snowdown hills, for the snow may be found on them for eight or nine months of the year. From the top of some of these mountains, in clear weather, may be seen the hills about Dublin, particularly the promontory of Hoath, at the extremity of the bay, to the seaward, and distant at least 80 or 90 miles.—And in a very clear day, in the morning, I have seen the tops of these Welch mountains from the hill of Hoath and the mountains of Wicklow, on the opposite side of the Irish sea.

At Aberconway there is an old castle, as magnificent in its ruins as perhaps any in Great-Britain, and that is well worthy the notice of the curious traveller.

I was much pleased with an old custom that still prevails in some parts of this North Welch country, that of entertaining the company at the several stages with the Welch harp, during their stay at their inns. From the novelty of the custom, and some of them perform very well, I assure you we were very much entertained. It has the appearance of a chearful and hospitable welcome, and relieves the mind as well as body from the heaviness and torpidity often acquired from the noise and jostling in a long confinement to a stage coach ; especially when the partners in the journey happen not to be the most sociably humoured.

After jumbling up and down these North Welch mountains for 80 or 90 miles, you at length reach the *Head*, the *Ne plus ult.* of *Terra Firma*, from whence to Dublin, about 60 or 70 miles, you must, if you proceed on your journey, trust your life and body to the chance of sea-room.

The timorous traveller, unused to the sea, here stops, and, with apprehensions not un-mixed with fear, surveys the fluid intradable road before him, surveys his floating carriage that is to convey him over this yawning, unsubstantial element, with but a few inches between his life and death. Doubtful and precarious tenure. If the wind blows, and the waves run high, his resolutions stagger. But interest, curiosity or shame at length get the better of his timidity. The gulph must be passed, and he resolves to hazard it.

To quiet his anxiety, however, and for his imagined greater security, he carefully consults his pilot.—Is there no danger, captain, in this same pasagc to Dublin ?—Why, 'faith, Sir, I will not positively assure you there is none, for fear you should be disappointed. The sailor, to be sure, is never out of danger on his element : however, I never went a-cross yet but came safe to the other side, and I *hope* I shall do so now.—Aye, captain, but the story of the pitcher—This same hope is but a weak security when a man has but three inches between his cabbin and a bed of salt water.—Have you never a fellow among your crew with a *gallows-mark* upon his face?— I hope not, Sir.—But is there is no insurance of a man's life for 60 miles only ?—Oh, yes, the best in the world, my noble master, a bottle of claret, to put the want of it out of your head.

From a little town and harbour just at the Head, there are several vessels or packets, in the service of the government, that pass every week to and from Dublin ; in any one of these, for half a guinea, you are accommodated with the use of the cabbin and bed ; into which if you get yourself laid before the ship is under way, and there lay fast to the end of your passage, you may, if you are fortunate, escape being sea-sick, if you are not so, you must take, and will probably have the chance of a good stomach scowering.

This is but a trivial remark, indeed but at is confirmed by common experiene a these short passages, that the best chance you can have for escaping that most sickly of all sicknesses, is continue in the position you are in when the ship first begins her motion, and the reclined position is the best, as the body in that posture, is put into the least motion by the tossing of the vessel ; not to mention, that in the cabbin you are nearer the bottom of the ship, where the motion is not so great by one half as on the deck.

The extent of the kingdom of Ireland, from the best observations that I could make, is about equal to that of England with an exception of Wales and the four northern counties of Durham, Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Northumberland. With these reductions, I believe, that England will not be found to exceed the limits of Ireland ; though the difference is generally supposed much greater than it really is.

The first object in Ireland that naturally, engages the notice of a stranger from England, by the way of Holy-Head, is the city of Dublin, the capital of the kingdom, situated on the

river Liffy, near two miles above the bottom of a beautiful bay, into which it discharges itself about seven or eight miles from the sea.

After 40 hours rolling and traversing the boisterous Irish sea, for 20 leagues only, with the wind, as the sailors say, *right in our teeth*, there was something peculiarly pleasing on entering the beautiful bay of Dublin, which is about three or four miles wide at its entrance, and seven or eight deep, with the hills and promontories on either hand, that promised us a smooth and safe passage up to the city, in prospect before us at the bottom of the bay.

With a fair wind, however, the passage from the Head is frequently made in 10 or 20 hours.

Dublin is a large, populous, and, for the greater part of it, well built city ; not much ornamented, indeed, with grand or magnificent buildings ; a few, however, there are, of which the college or university, the only one they have in the kingdom—the parliament houses—the king's and the lying-in hospital, and Swift's for lunatics—with the marquis of Kildare's house are the principal. Their churches in general make but a very indifferent figure as to their architecture ; and what I was very much surprised at, are amazingly destitute of monumental ornaments.

The two houses of parliament are infinitely superior, in point of grandeur and magnificence, to those of Westminster. The house of lords is, perhaps, as elegant a room as any in Great-Britain or Ireland.

The college library, from the number of volumes it contains, the magnificence and greatness of the room, and the convenient disposition of the books and desks for the use of the students, is well deserving the notice of the traveller.

The Castle, as it is called from its having been the situation of one, I suppose, of which at present there are very few remains, is the residence of the lord lieutenant when in Ireland, but has very little of grandeur in its external appearance besides the large square court-yard, which it encloses. But the rooms, some of them, are large and elegant.

The whole extent of the city of Dublin may be about one third of London, including Westminster and Southwark, and one-fourth, at least, of the whole, from the accounts we received, has been built within these 40 years. Those parts of the town which have been added since that time are well built, and the streets in general well laid out, especially on the north side of the river ; where the most considerable additions have been made within the term above mentioned. There are on this side many spacious and regular streets : one in particular in the north east part of the town, *Sackville Street*, about 70 feet wide or nearly, with a mall inclosed with a low wall, which, but for the execrable stupidity of the builder, would have been one of the most noble streets in the three kingdoms, had it been carried, as it might have been, and was proposed to him at the time of laying it out, directly up to the front of the lying-in hospital, the most elegant and the best finished piece of architecture in Dublin, and I believe in Ireland : and if, besides this, the projected addition of a street from the bottom of it, on the same plan, directly on to the Liffy, to which the present street directs, had been executed, and terminated, as was intended, on the opposite side of the river by a view of some public building that was there to have been erected in front of the street, it would have been one of the grandest and most beautiful streets perhaps in Europe. But as the first absurdity of carrying up the present street just by the end of the hospital has taken place, this projected improvement will hardly ever be carried into execution, and the obstinate fool of a builder will deservedly be damned by every stranger, of common sense and taste, that shall ever walk up Sackville-Street.

The view of Dublin from the top of any of their towers, is the most beautiful, perhaps, of any large city in the king's dominions, in a similar point of view, from the neatness of the blue slating with which the houses of this city are universally covered. The bay below the city to the east, with the country adjacent round, will afford a very entertaining prospect.

The river Liffy, which runs through almost the center from west to east, and contributes, as much as the Thames to that of London, to the health of this city, is but a small river, about one-fifth as wide in Dublin as the Thames in London, consequently can bring up no ships of great burden. I believe that 150 or 200 tons is quite as much as can be navigated up to the city.

Over this river there are five bridges, one only of which deserves any notice, Essex-bridge, the lowest of all, which is really a well built, spacious and elegant bridge, with raised foot-paths, alcoves, and ballustrading, on the plan of Westminster bridge, and about the same width, but not above one fifth part so long. The south-end of this bridge fronts to a new street called Parliament-street, about the length of Bridge-street over Westminster-bridge, which, when the intended improvements are made, by continuing it on in a line up to the castle, with an area, in which is to be built an exchange, much wanted in this city, will be one of the most beautiful trading streets in the three kingdoms.

There are two elegant theatres opened in this city, the old and the new, as they are commonly distinguished ; the former in Smock-alley, the latter in Crow-street ; besides a third in Aungier-street, more magnificent, they tell you, than either of the others, which for several years has been shut up. But indeed the *two* that are opened are *one* too many to be well supported. If the two kings of Brentford, that are the managers, and are fighting, *totis manibus*, against each other, were to unite in the largest house, and the same zeal and industry that is employed for the destruction of each other were exerted for their united interest and the entertainment of the public, with a good company of comedians, which out of the two houses might be collected, they might undoubtedly make great advantages, and theatric entertainments might be exhibited in Dublin in as great perfection as in any town in the king's dominions ; for *one* house might be able to pay some of the best actors that could be found, equal to their merit, which *two* can neither procure a sufficient number of, nor pay them if they had them.

The old house of Smock-alley, though not so large as the new, which is about equal to that of Drury-lane, is one of the most elegant and best constructed theatres for the advantage of both the audience and actors, of any that I ever went into.

They have their summer entertainments too, in imitation of those in London. Adjoining to the Lying-in hospital above mentioned, and belonging to it, is a large square piece of ground enclosed, and three sides out of four very prettily laid out in walks and plantations of groves, shrubs, trees, &c. on the fourth stands the hospital. In the middle, nearly, of this garden is a spacious and beautiful bowling green. On the side of the green opposite the hospital, the ground being much higher, is formed into a fine hanging bank of near 30 feet slope, on the top of which is laid out a grand terrace walk, commanding a fine view of the hospital ; on the upper side of this terrace, and nearly encompassed with the groves and shrubberies, is built a very pretty orchestra.

This, the most agreeable garden about Dublin, is their Vaux-hall in the summer season, and is much frequented in the fine summer evenings by the genteel company of the city. And though the whole garden is not so generally calculated for a musical entertainment as the garden of Vaux-hall near London, yet there are some walks in it where the music has a finer effect than in any that I ever found in the London Vaux-hall.

The inhabitants of this city, and indeed throughout the kingdom, those of them that are people of any fortune, are genteel, sprightly, sensible, and sociable, and, in general, well affected to the English. Their dress, fashions and diversions are taken from them ; and who-ever shall carry over any species of popular entertainment from London, will be sure to meet with encouragement, if he has but the good fortune to be singular in his profession.

They pique themselves much on their hospitality from all parts of the kingdom. I have no objection at all to allowing them all the merit and importance that is due to this commendable virtue. But should there be any appearances of this Hibernian hospitality, that to a candid spectator should seem to be miscalled, and rather to deserve the name of ostentation, from all of this kind I must beg leave to object to every degree of their presumed merit : and I am afraid, indeed, that too much of their boasted hospitality in every province has a much greater right to be denominated ostentation.— If, instead of *killing twenty sheep to furnish out a dish of KIDNEYS to an epicurean visitor*, a few of those hospitable gentlemen, of the first rank and fortune in the kingdom, would concur for the setting on foot some generous and humane establishment for the relief of thousands of their miserable poor, whom oppression, poverty, and want of employment, drives almost to desperation, their names would deserve to be engraved in characters indelible in the temple of hospitality. I will take upon me to say, that the Englishman that can drink will find them as hospitable as any people in Europe ; for if he will but *drink* like an *Irishman*, he is welcome to *eat* like an *Englishman*.

I remember to have heard a very hospitable gentleman of this class express himself in favour of a stranger from England, that was just introduced into the company, after a little conversation had removed the stiffness and reserve of a first interview—*Well Sir, as you are come over quite a stranger to the country, it behoves us to make it as agreeable as we can,—There is a company of us to meet at the Black Rock on a jolly Party on Sunday next, and, by Jesus, there is to be five or six dozen of claret to be emptied, will you give us the honour of your company ?—Sir, you'll excuse me—I shall be engaged.*—Twas very hospitable, though.

To be serious, — for you may think, perhaps, that I have too freely given into the satyric strain, and at the expence of my hospitable friends. I am very willing to believe, that in their own acceptance of the term, as taken from the too frequent exhibition of it amongst them, they have as much hospitality as any people in the world. But as in this view of them, as well as in every other, I would write with an honest frankness ; and without respect of persons, or fallacious colouring, represent things just as I found them, I am very free to say, that their hospitality seems to partake so much of intemperance, is attended frequently with so much inconvenience to the party entertained, as to have given me, from a few trials of it, almost a disgust against every of their pretensions to it. The sum and quintessence of hospitality is expressed in that single line of Pope,

“ Welcome the coming, speed the going friend :”

By which is implied, an absence of every species of compulsion or restraint, and, which is the true sterling hospitality, the making the choice of your guest the measure of your friendship and entertainment. But to attempt to send him away drunk is surely setting him off with but very ill speed. If a temperate man accepts of an invitation from one of these hospitable gentlemen, he can very seldom escape, but by being absolutely, and even to a degree of ill manners, peremptory, without having five times as much liquor poured down his throat as he would chuse. To do justice to their generosity, however, he is free and right welcome to *eat* just as much as he pleases ; and why he should not have the same liberty with respect to his *drink*, however hospitable the restriction, or rather forced profusion, may be thought by these gentlemen, I own is to me a paradox in urbanity. But, fo far as there is any intention of

trying the depth or soundness of the constitution, or the bottom, as the expression is, of their unsuspecting friend over the bottle, their hospitality is superlatively contemptible ; and to raise a merit to themselves from having made their guest most nobly drunk, is betraying, at best, but a sottish and groveling taste.—You would hardly think that from the simple dictates of hospitality, a gentleman should have his horse and boots locked up for two or three days, and himself, by that means, in a manner forcibly detained for eight-and-forty hours, when he only intended, and his business, perhaps, would only admit of his taking a dinner and a chearful bottle. Yet, instances of this I have known, I assure you, in this hospitable country ; to such ridiculous extravagances may the most commendable virtues of humanity be perverted by a false notion of things, supported by the authority of example. Among the sensible part of the natives, however, the absurdity of deriving such a practice or inclination from the dictates of hospitality, is too glaring to escape detection, or to meet with any countenance ; with these therefore, in every country, it will deservedly be exploded.

What I have wrote on this subject has been with the utmost impartiality, and on which I have been more particular because it is a favourite topic among them. It is a point of view in which the natives of every province appear to assume a distinguishing merit. In any mixed company of different provincials, you will seldom fail of having this for one of the subjects of your entertainment. In such a situation, the stranger has a natural right to examine into the merits of it.

Bat after all, however doubtful he may be, from experience, of the justice of their claim, yet, if a requisite degree of candour enters into his examination, he must allow there is a native sprightliness and sociability, a spirit of generosity and frankness in their general manner, that is conspicuous and engaging, and that cannot fail to recommend them to strangers. And whatever apprehensions he may have of the eventual inconvenience, can hardly refuse to accept of an invitation given with such appearances of friendship and urbanity.

It is very extraordinary, that in this large and populous city there should be such an almost total want of good inns for the accommodation of strangers and travellers. There is not absolutely one good inn in the town, not one, upon my honour, in which an Englishman of any sense of decency would be satisfied with his quarters, and not above two or three in the whole city that he could bear to be in ; and every body that is acquainted with the place gets into private lodgings as soon as they come to town. But this is a circumstance that the stranger from England, or elsewhere, is often unacquainted with, and consequently frequently meets with difficulties at his first landing, that will make it appear to him an inhospitable country. It may happen, indeed, that he may be in distress even for a night's lodging, if the very few tolerable inns should be full. Nor is there above one bagnio that I could find in the whole city, where a gentleman that had any regard for his reputation or safety, would venture to lodge, himself, this is in Essex-street ; and here it is more than an equal chance that he is obliged to pay a shilling for a bed about two feet wide, in a room not much above four, perhaps. This has been my own case. 'Tis true, you are generally lodged clean and quiet : and a person not more delicate than wife, will compound with these inconveniencies for the want of room and elegance. I do not know a town in the three kingdoms where a large house well fitted up with as many neat apartments as possible, could be more likely to answer the wishes or expectations of the owner than in this city. Every stranger, therefore, that proposes making any stay in Dublin, if it be but for a fortnight, I would advise to have immediate recourse to the public coffee-houses, of which he will find several in Essex-street by the custom-house, and there get directions to the private inhabitants of the town who furnish lodgings ; and almost every one in the public-streets, that can spare an apartment, lets it for this use : and in an hour's time, perhaps, he may meet with one for any time, that will be convenient for his use but, if his room is neat, will deldom get it under half a guinea per week.

The chief magistrate in Dublin, as well as in London, has the dignity of lord mayor annexed to his office for the time being.

The provisions of this city are generally good, and at a reasonable expence ; — Their liquor especially ; — you have the best of spirits at half the price they generally go at in London : for three pence per quartern, or naggin as it is called there, you have the best that can be drank.

Their wine is chiefly claret, the best of which, that the town produces, may be had at 2s. 6d. the bottle—the common price is two shillings—and to those who are unaccustomed to a claret of a greater body, it will soon become very pleasant, and the most agreeable palated wine he will meet with in Ireland. 'Tis light, wholesome, and easy of digestion. You will think it rather of the marvellous, but it is no less true, that a middling drinker here will carry off his four bottles without being the least apparently disordered. A man is looked upon, indeed, as nothing with his bottle here, that can't take off his gallon coolly. I believe it may be said with a great deal of truth, that the Irish drink the most of any of his majesty's subjects with the least injury.

'Tis hardly possible, indeed, to make an Irishman, that can in any sense be called a drinker, thoroughly drunk with his claret ; by that time he has discharged his five or six bottles, he will get a little flashy, perhaps, and yon may drink him to eternity he'll not be much more. One very favourable circumstance for the drinker, custom has here established, their glasses are very small : the largest of these in common use, will not hold more, I believe, than about one-third of a gill, or quartern.

This is an excellent custom in favour of the moderate drinker, for many an one of this class, I make no doubt, would be more intoxicated with three half pint glasses, than he would be by three times three half pints drank in very small quantities at a time. But let my countryman be cautious of making comparisons relative to his wine ; be careful not to call your claret, at any private gentleman's house, what yet it generally very justly deserves to be called, a *pretty* wine, or even a very *pretty* wine. For though a very common expression in England for good wines, yet the terms are not sufficiently expressive or emphatical for an Irishman, who, before you are aware of it, or apprehensive of having given any offence, will very probably descant away and explain upon the meaning of your expression, in a manner that will, perhaps, disconcert you, or, at best, give you but a very unfavourable opinion of the temper and understanding of your host. For conscious of the inferiority of his claret to that of London, if he has ever known the difference, he will be jealous of every expression that has but even a distant appearance of being comparative.—The above caution is the result of my own experience in the country ; and as it may eventually be a very useful one, I have introduced it.

The rates of hackney-coaches, and sedans, are established here as in London, for the different distances, or *set-downs*, as they are called. But they have an odd kind of hacknies here, that is called the *Noddy*, which is nothing more than an old cast off one horse chaise or chair, with a kind of stool fixed upon the shafts just before the seat, on which the driver sits, just over the rump of his horse, and drives you from one part of the town to another at stated rates for a *set-down* ; and a damn'd set-down it is sometimes, for you are well off if you are not set down in a kennel by the breaking of the wheels, or an overset-down, nor can you see any thing before you but your nod—nod—nodding charioteer, whose situation on the shafts obliges his motion to be conformed to that of the horse, from whence, I suppose, they have obtained the name of the *Noddy* ; I assure you, the ease of the fare is not much consulted in the construction of these nodding vehicles. However, they are convenient for single persons, the fare being not more than halt that of a coach, and are taken to any part of the kingdom, on terms as you can agree.

But the drollest and most diverting kind of conveyance for your genteel and ungenteel parties of pleasure is what they call here the *Chaise-Marine*, which is nothing less or more than any common *carr* with one horse. A simple kind of carriage, constructed with a pair of wheels, or thin round blocks, of about 20 inches in diameter, an axle, and two shafts, which, over the axle, are spread out a little wider than by the sides of the horse, and framed together with cross pieces, in such manner as to be nearly in a level portion for three or four feet across the axle. These simple construdions are almost the only kind of carts, in common use, for the carrying or moving of goods, merchandize of every kind, hay, straw, corn, dung, turf, &c. throughout the kingdom.

.....half a dozen gets on, two behind and two on each side, and away they drive, with their feet not above six inches from the ground as they fit, on little pleasure jaunts of three or four or half a dozen miles out of town ; and are the most sociable carriages in use, for ten or a dozen will take one of these chaife-marines, and ride it by turns, the rate being seldom, in such cases, more than foot-pace. I assure you they are the drollest:, merriest; curricles you ever saw. We were infinitely diverted at meeting many of these feather-bed chaise-marine parties, on the Sunday that we landed, coming out of town, as we went up to it from Dunlary.

Upon my word. Sir, the inhabitants, in general, of this kingdom are very far from being what they have too often and unjustly been represented by those of our country who never saw them, a nation of wild Irish : since I have been in Ireland, I have traversed from north to south and from west to east the three provinces of Ulster, Leinster and Munster, and generally found them civil and obliging, even amongst: the very lowest class of the natives. Miserable and oppressed, as by far too many of them are, an Englishman will find as much civility, in general, as amongst the same class in his own country ; and; for a small pecuniary consideration, will exert themselves to please you as much as any people, perhaps, in the king's dominions. Poverty and oppression will naturally make mankind sour, rude and unsociable, and eradicate, or, at least, suppress all the more amiable principles and passions of humanity. But it should seem unfair and ungenerous to judge of, or decide against the natural disposition of a man reduced by indigence and oppression almost to desperation. For a peasant of Ireland to be civil and obliging is a work of supererogation.

[1] Tunbridge Wells.

Hibernia curiosa. A letter from a gentleman in Dublin, to his friend at Dover in Kent. Giving a general view of the manners, customs, dispositions, &c. of the inhabitants of Ireland. With occasional observations on the state of trade and agriculture in that kingdom ... Collected in a tour through the kingdom in the year 1764 .. (1769)

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